
Title: An Archival

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Woe is the day that I
fancied myself a hero -
able to creep stealthily
past enemy lines in hopes
of spying some crucial bit
of information that might
turn the tide of battle
to our camp. I thought
myself a great warrior,
full of bravery, confidence
- the champion of our
cause. I thought that if I
could only prove myself
here, in our darkest hour,
that all vistas might be
open to me - that my
superiors might see I had
what it took to command.

Now the horrors I have
seen...that unwholesome
monument to evil. I
cannot help but laugh at
my own foolhardiness,
that I believed I could
best any dreadful beast I
might find within the city
walls - but e'en that
laugh comes out as a
foul, choking cackle now.

Indeed, I did manage to
skulk within the walls of
Trinsic for a time,
prowling from one
darkened alley to the
next, my every sense
alert for the shuffling
footsteps of the undead
patrols - or the stench
that inevitably follows. I
evaded three or four of
the foul groups before
reaching the interior of
the city, to look up at
the dark, noxious edifice.

That it towered o'er a
building that was once

the heart of all decent
gatherings within the city
only made the black
monument all the more
vile. An immense
structure, its gloomy
walls appeared to the eye
to be ancient blocks of
stone, crumbling and near
to collapse. If it were
not for the sense of
incredible power that the
structure itself seemed
to emanate, I would have
thought it more of a
primeval ruin than a
tower so recently
constructed.

I saw the undead legions
pass their fetid, rotting
hands over the surface
of the shadow stone -
seeming to complete some
last act that would bring
forth a terrible, potent
magic from within the
structure. For indeed, as
the foul beasts finished
with their abhorrent
ritual, the stone seemed
to come to life, much
like the assembled undead
had done before. A
swirling cloud of noxious
gas began to emanate
from the summit of the
temple, infused with great
arcs of lightning energy.
After mere moments the
combined effect of the
crashing noise and the
foul stench originating
from the black shrine
were almost too much to
bear. Would that I had
stumbled away then, under
the power of the assault.
But nay, I stood forth
even then, resolute that
my reconnaissance would
be complete.

And then she stepped
forth. It could be none
other than Minax herself
- her every feature had
been burned into memory

from the few descriptions
from the front. And yet,
as she stepped from
within the black
monument, fully into the
light, I saw more daemon
than woman. The
thunderous cacophony of
sound and stench coupled
with her wild-eyed
expression, her teeth
bared in a snarl like a
rabid dog would make, it
seemed to hold me in
place. Though every sinew
in my body screamed to
be put into action, I
stood and stared,
watching as she gazed
out over the assembled
horde of undead, raising
her hands high into the
air.

Her feral snarl turned
into a smile so cold and
malevolent it seemed even
her skeletal warriors
were taken aback by the
display. Then she turned
to me, as if she could
feel the presence of a
living being out across
the square, lowering one
arm and pointing across
the distance between us.
If that were not enough
to raise me to my feet
and begin my mad dash
throughout the streets of
Trinsic, the sight behind
her drove my body into
action while my mind
reeled in the black space
of madness.

From the Town Cryer -
The Journal of Ultima
Online, February 21st,
2000.
